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Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman Chalet
Ambassador for UN Management and Reform
On Agenda Item 137: Strategic Heritage Plan
Main Session of the Fifth Committee, 74th General Assembly
November 25, 2019

[As-delivered]

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States appreciates the Secretary General's update on the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) and the significant work done over the last year. Transparency and good governance must comprise member state decision-making on financing the SHP initiative. This includes related efforts to reduce the financial burden on member states through alternative options. In order to contain costs of this \$800m+ undertaking, it is my delegation's expectation that any revenue gained from the leasing of any UN property in Geneva or valorization of UN-owned land in Geneva must be applied to the Strategic Heritage Plan. We look forward to the Secretary-General's next report on this issue.

We also note the Board of Auditors' recommendations regarding project timeline and risk management, including their assessment with low confidence that the project will be completed within budget and urge the Secretary-General to redouble efforts to ensure the project is completed within the budget approved. We look forward to learning more about these mitigation measures in the next report.

Mr. Chair,

The Strategic Heritage Plan involves many components, including governance, risk management, space utilization, accessibility, and staff welfare and productivity during both the transition and implementation phases of the program. We look forward to discussing these issues further this session along with the financing arrangement to ensure that member states continue to provide the direction needed for success of the project.

By its resolution 70/248, the General Assembly mandated implementation of flexible workplace as an integral aspect to SHP. We are pleased that the new building will be fitted out as a flexible workplace during the transition period as well as during its final occupancy. My delegation thanks the UN Office in Geneva and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance for their efforts to maximize space efficiency in the new and existing buildings, including the Palais des Nations. Regarding the Palais, we look forward to hearing from the

Secretary-General and the SHP team their plans to identify opportunities to ensure a more flexible workplace with increased capacity, one that is better suited for the 21st century UN, as recommended by the ACABQ.

Mr. Chair,

In closing, my delegation would like to reiterate our commitment to the success of this project, including the need to transparently and effectively manage its resources in order to complete the project on time and within budget. We stand ready to work constructively with delegations to ensure that outcome.

Thank you.